

The Calcutta University Magazine

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University Intelligence.

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ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MORAL TRAINING.

(By a Teacher—Hindu School)

The subject may be viewed in its twofold aspect, The External, outside the school, and The Internal, inside the school, though we are particularly concerned here with the latter.

As regards external arrangement we have to consider chiefly the school environment. The environs again may be looked upon from two different points of view, the sanitary and the Ethical, one contributing largely to the other.

From the Sanitary point of view the School premises should be located

I. Their Sanitary aspect.

where the surroundings seem most favourable to the development of the physical system. Dry grassy grounds allowing free passage of light and air, lovely landscapes inviting to the eye, arrangements for athletic games and sports and also for drill—all these are necessary for the preservation and improvement of health tending to generate vivacity and cheerfulness of heart and soul. And as the health of mind depends in great measure upon the health of the body, "Mens sana in corpore sano" the question of physical health is highly important in considering the subject of mental and moral development.

From the Ethical point of view the surroundings should be such as are

II. Their Ethical aspect
(a) Beautiful & refined surroundings.

friendly to culture and refinement. It is impossible to secure moral vigour with an environment of such centres of disturbance as theatres, gambling dens or houses of ill-fame. The very atmosphere which supports the moral life of the Institution thereby becomes poisonous.

The School grounds should be the object lessons of beauty in order to foster a taste for refinement in the pupils and make them cheerful and happy. Natural beauty should be considered in selecting School grounds, but a site not naturally attractive may be rendered such by art. The cheerful and sublime

surroundings act with a moral influence, though slowly and silently, upon the tender minds of the young folks, opening their æsthetic faculties and revealing to them in their manifold aspects, the presence of an Unseen Power presiding over the arrangements of the Universe.

Again Drill and similar other physical exercises are highly valuable from

(b) Drill and other orderly Exercises. the moral point of view. They teach obedience, one of the cardinal moral virtues, help in the formation of habits of regularity, promptitude of action and above all quicken the important mental factor, attention.

Occasional excursions with Teachers, to see country sights, visit the Museum, the Zoo or the Botanical gardens are also highly useful to students. The pupils are thereby taught how to observe, to see things intelligently and to interpret them rationally. Excursions of the like nature serve to awaken the pupils' spirit of curiosity or their sense of wonder by acquainting them with the mystery of the World and the infinite variety in the aspects of creation, calling forth in their youthful and sensitive minds innumerable fancies and ceaseless inquiries and thus inspiring them with a zeal to study with real advantage—honestly and diligently.

Internal Arrangement The Internal arrangement of the School should always aim at character-building.

Moral training cannot be something of extraneous character, but must be an integral part of every exercise of daily life—the atmosphere one lives in, the spirit one breathes. And the arrangement in the School should be such as tend to generate a purely moral atmosphere, create an ennobling ethical spirit.

I. More or less Indirect moral training. Arrangement for more or less Indirect moral training in School may include the following :—

The portraits and statues of great men of letters and of action, of the veteran educationists, of retired teachers of the Institution with brief notes attached, placed near the walls or tablets of like nature set on them—all these will act every day and every hour with a subtle and magical power upon the receptive faculties of the pupils calling out with mute indications, as it were, "Go thou and do likewise."

Discussions of moral topics in school-clubs or Debating Societies of pupils, have their ethical value. By these (d) Debating Clubs the members with the help of their President (generally the Head master or a senior Teacher of the Institution) are led to

form right ideas of duty, honesty, justice, truth, beauty and so on. These discussions, in addition to the facilities they afford in improving the pupils' power of speaking and writing, help to remove many of their crude and erroneous notions—some being corrected, some modified while others are supplemented. They are thus led to find out moral truths for themselves and are placed on that broad and fair path which if they were to advance through, would enable them to realise the noblest ideal of moral life.

A Library containing good and useful books—works of great poets, biographies, histories, travels and other refined literature—contributes no less to the opening of the intellectual and moral faculties than School Clubs or Debating Societies just noticed. Boys specially of the higher classes should be encouraged to use these books frequently. Helpful books may be selected so as to suit the capacities of the pupils by the teachers concerned. Every Teacher may be an Assistant Librarian, so that through him pupils may get books to read them during their leisure-hours or holidays.

Direct arrangement in School for character building is always necessary.

School studies should be such as help the growth of character. They should always look to character-building, lead to higher ideals and higher realisations. The plan of lessons on different subjects should be such as are calculated to enforce moral lessons on conduct. Moral virtues are represented in stories and incidents. Though duty is taught incidentally in all School work, special conduct lessons are no doubt highly valuable.

I. Plans of School studies.

(a) Best moral lessons are those which tend to foster higher ideals and good conduct. Incidents in the lives of great men and women are always helpful. While

(a) Moral Lessons. teaching History, events involving morals and good manners should be specially emphasised and rendered interesting and helpful to the pupils. Patiently and persistently the Teacher should lead his pupils to grow the cardinal virtues into habits. All lessons should be selected and taught to promote this end.

(b) The important principle of *adaptation* should always be kept in view by the Teacher in every arrangement for moral training. All conduct lessons should be

(b) Their adaptation. adapted to the stage of growth and to the social environment of the pupils. The Teacher should be *acquainted with the homelives of the pupils* and teach moral lessons in consonance with their actual experiences. Greater familiarity

between the Teacher and the taught is the real key to success in moral training.

(c) The beneficial result of the use of separate moral text books is

(a) Separate moral text always doubtful. No text book must ever be books, used to teach moral lessons. Stories should generally be told and occasionally read. Detailed lessons as found in books must be used merely as suggestive. Conduct lessons should be characterised by spontaneity. But books on moral subjects in the School Library are helpful as supplementing these lessons.

2. Teacher's special Duty. Teacher's special duty with regard to moral training may include the following :—

He should determine the pupils' motive. The wellknown proverb runs—

(a) Determination of pupils' motives. "Example is better than precept." Indeed the manners of the Teacher influence the pupils' moral conduct more than anything else¹. We all know how this purpose was served in days of yore in this country. The pupils lived with their preceptor till they completed the whole course of their studies. It is a social principle which has never been gainsaid, that one person can largely influence the conduct of another. Through the Teacher's example, through stories and all lessons, the Teacher gives direction to the pupils' thoughts and impulses and awakens ennobling desires and high purposes. It is the Teacher who is to mould and shape the plastic materials, the early tendencies of the pupils, into orderly and strong edifices of moral habits.

The Teacher's attitude towards the taught determines his winning

(b) Teacher's attitude towards pupils. factor. The teacher should look always cheerfully to his pupils.² A grim, cold, repulsive Teacher chills the students to the very bones, and the pupils unconsciously copy their Teacher. The Teacher should encourage his pupils in all their noble undertakings. A harsh look, an indifferent attitude has been the death of many a noble resolve. The Teacher should be the pupils' sympathetic friend, helper and companion.³ He should therefore be warm-hearted as well as pure-hearted. The teacher should be particularly careful about using any discouraging expression or passing any bitter remarks about the conduct of his pupils, whether about study or general bearing. He should not drive but lead and guide. By friendly looks, kind words and generous acts the Teacher

1. स्यात् गुरुः सत्क्रियापरः । विष्णुस्मृतौ ॥

2. सदा सस्मितभाषिणं गुरुं भजन् । गुरुगौतायां ॥

3. दयानुः सुशीलः शान्तः, स्यात्गुरुः शिष्यवत्सलः । तन्मनुक्तावल्यां ॥

wins the esteem and love of his pupils and makes them his true friends.* In the sunshine of affection all that is lovely in pupils' nature buds and blossoms in early life and bears fruits in maturer years.

The Teacher should not only know how to win the hearts of his pupils but also to control and lead them. He should develop the will-power of his pupils. By his own example, by telling about noble people and by training, he should infuse into his pupils iron determination and indomitable courage, so that every pupil will develop the double art of self-control and self-government.

As regards his leading factor, the Teacher must have a sound knowledge of the subject he teaches and must put the thing in the simplest manner possible. The pupils must have confidence in his knowledge. It is a fact universally admitted that all the world follows the man that knows. The well-known maxim "Knowledge is power" is being verified by every act man is concerned in. In order to lead, the Teacher should also be a student of human nature. He should know clearly and fully the tendencies, inclinations as well as capacities of his pupils in order to be in a fit position to lead and to prevent lawlessness. Further, in order to be a right leader, the Teacher must act according to certain well-recognised system and should not change his plan constantly or uselessly.

And lastly, the Teacher should place before his pupils a high moral ideal. He should help them in fixing this ideal in their minds, so that in every act they do, they may realise whether they are advancing towards it or drawing back from it. But unless the teacher himself proceed in the path leading to the realisation of the highest moral ideal, it is impossible to make pupils act morally, for as has already been noticed, the pupils unconsciously imitate their Teacher. The great responsibility in moral training, therefore, lies with the Teacher. It is he who is the main architect in building up the future fate of the pupils.

Innocent amusements in the shape of literary recreations such as recitations of noble poems, going through dialogues conveying moral lessons, representing short dramatic scenes with a strong ethical bearing, should all be encouraged as contributing more or less towards moral development. Hindu boys may be encouraged to get by heart and recite moral verses from *Chanakya*, the *Gita* or *Sankara*.

The School discipline and School government, if systematically carried on, will teach pupils to work silently and orderly.

(e) Discipline in School.

Regularity and promptness are School virtues.

It is in the School that gentility and generosity become ingrained. Thus by the maintenance of proper discipline the pupils are made to cherish all right habits. They learn to know their own faults and even punishments prove helpful to them. The School discipline should be looked upon as one of the potent factors in promoting the growth of character.

The sanctions of School regulations have a distinct ethical aspect.

(f) Punishment.

Punishment is meant to impress upon the pupils

the fact that the way of the transgressors is hard and that lawlessness is invariably followed by suffering, that every law whether in the physical or moral world, has its proper sanction. The punishment, therefore, should be inflicted in such a manner, that the guilty may realise that he suffers for the offence he actually committed and that the motive of the teachers is a noble one viz. to correct him and not to render him an object of ridicule. But corporal punishment should be avoided as much as possible. It tends in many cases to wound the self-respect of boys specially when they are grown up. In fact it generates bitterness and fear. It is a low incentive which does not tend to ennoble. As a general rule it hurts and does not help the pupil. It injures the teacher also, because it renders him unfit for understanding the inner nature of his pupils and for governing them through ennobling motives. Punishment should, therefore, be always corrective and be so managed in love that the offender may feel that he suffers in order that he may get right and keep himself in the right way.

Punctuality in attending the School and in every work touching the school arrangement should always be enforced.

(g) Punctuality.

This cardinal virtue of human character is now much wanting in this country. The value and importance of punctuality to the Teacher and the taught are alike. The pupil that comes late may be brought to his senses by confining him for the time by which he is late after school hours or depriving him of a part of his recreation hour intervening between the working periods. The pupils should be helped to realise what severe injury may be sustained by a person for want of punctuality and the superb necessity of this virtue in every stage and sphere of life and also the fact that unless the habit be acquired in early life, the whole career of the man will be a grand failure. Punctuality is in no way less important in other departments of business-life than in the army or the navy.

Orderly conduct of the pupils in going out of the class room, submitting books for examination to the Teacher, standing for doing honour to a visitor and in sundry other like things, should not be lost sight of and by no means ignored. These are small things no doubt, but they are the manifestations or results of the most important part of the school government, moral discipline. An oversight in these matters is the initiative towards weakening the moral force of the Institution, and inattention to other matters follows as a matter of course.

THE BRAHMANAS.

(Paper read by Pandit Yogesa Chandra Sastree at the Calcutta University Institute.)

The division of the Vedas is two-fold : Mantra and Brahmana. Such a division is indeed an essential one especially when it separates two different classes of writings, which are related to one another as canonized text on the one hand, and canonized explanation on the other. That part of each Veda which contains the mantras—the metrical hymns or prose forms of prayer—is called its Samhita, and this definition applies equally to all the Samhitas, except to that of the Black Yajurveda, in which both the Mantra and the Brahmana portions are combined. But yet it is to be believed that this Samhita had a separate Brahmana annexed to it. The Brahmanas stand to the mantras in the same relation as the Talmud does to the Mosaic code. The former pre-suppose the earlier existence of the latter ; and the proof that the mantras are far older than any other portion of Indian literature, is to be found particularly in the character of their language. Though the mantras and the Brahmanas were held at a later period to have existed together, it admits of no question that the Brahmana portion of each Veda is posterior at least to some part of its Samhita ; for the former evidently refers to, and contains extracts from the latter. And it needs scarcely be stated that so large a collection of works including both the portions must have been the gradual product of several centuries. Indeed, they represent various mutations of society, various phases of religious belief, and even different periods of language. The difficulty in distinguishing these periods is however immensely increased by the probable losses, which these writings might have sustained before they were gathered together and preserved in the form in which we now find them. The mantras and the Brahmanas had to pass through a large number of *Sakhas*, or recensions, and consequently the dissensions, which sprang up

among those schools, either in connection with the Vaidik texts or their interpretations, were very bitter. The mantras are generally in verse, while the Brahmanas are entirely in prose. The mantias, in fact, were for ages unwritten, and the elliptical style of their composition is the only evidence of their oral transmission.

Most of the Brahmanas are collective works ; and there are old and new Brahmanas. But those that are now obsolete, are found in diverse manners quoted or referred to. The Brahmanas, in fact, were the productions of the schools of the Brahmanic priesthood, *i. e.* they were found by different Rishis in different ways and in different times. They are found to contain much important matter both theological and ceremonial. We also find in them the oldest rituals, the oldest linguistic expositions, the oldest legendary narratives and the oldest philosophical, scientific and mystical speculations all of which are mixed up with each other. But they seem to differ widely from one another in point of detail ; and this is simply owing to the fact that they belong to one or the other of the Vedas. With respect to their origin and age they occupy a kind of intermediate position between the transition from a simple Vaidik mode of thought to Brahmanical research. And this transition was, indeed, brought about solely by the Brahmanas themselves. They were drawn up with a view to enforce various ceremonies and sacrifices ; to illustrate the use of the hymns at them ; and to enjoin the duties of the different classes of priests. The number of the old Brahmanas must have been very considerable, as every *Sakha* consisted of a *Samhita* and a *Brahmana*. It must not, therefore, be supposed that the *Brahmanas* were not all composed independently by different authors. Every *Brahmana* is included in its own Veda, and is ascribed to no human author. The different Brahmanas, in fact, obtained their names from the schools by which they were transmitted. For the Rig-veda, we have the *Atitareya* and the *Sankhayana* or *Kousitaki*, for the Sama-veda, the *Proudha*, the *Shadvinsa*, the *Samavidhi* and others ; for the White Yajurveda, the *Satapatha* ; for the Black Yajurveda, the *Taittiriya*, and for the Atharva Veda the *Gopatha*. The *Brahmanas* of the Rik generally prescribe the duties of the *Hotris* ; the Brahmanas of the *Saman* specify the duties of the *Udgatris* ; and the *Brahmanas* of the *Yajus* confine themselves to the duties of the *Adhvaryus*.

At first a *Brahmana* was a theological tract ; and it was so called because it owed its origin to *brahman* or prayer. The whole collection of Brahmanas gives the idea of having undergone a secondary change ; and their prevalence forms a different stage in the progress of the religious history of the Indo-Aryans. They contain a system of belief which was the product of religious

practice. They are very useful for an explanation of the principles of belief; because they were composed with the distinct object of illustrating and establishing the whole sacrificial ceremonial. They exhibit, on the whole, a distinct phase in the intellectual evolution of the Indo-Aryans; but from a literary point of view though we cannot attach much value to them, they are not altogether without any interest. They are, in the main, marked by serious reasoning, full of genuine thoughts, lofty expressions, and valuable traditions; but their general characteristics mainly consist in their archaisms, grammatical irregularities, antiquated and tautological style, and antiquarian observations. In them, we find a pantheistic system; and this system was adopted simply for the explanation of the Vaidik deities. It is not easy to define their relation accurately; and the ritualistic precepts and illustrations are distributed under two heads of *Vidhi* or ordinance and *Arthavada* or declaration of purposes. There also occur numerous tales of the battles between the *Devas* and the *Asuras*; which, according to Western scholars, are to be understood as traditional reminiscences of the hostilities between the Indo-Aryans and the Persa-Aryans. Even there the Brāhman, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra are repeatedly named by their proper appellations; and their peculiar offices and relative stations are also clearly discriminated. The Brāhmanas, in fact, are the history of one of the most important periods in the social and mental development of India.

The Gopatha Brāhmana of the Atharvaveda is the Veda of the Bhrigu-angiras; which according to some scholars does not properly belong to the sacred literature of the Indo-Aryans. This Brāhmana is not of very great length, and is throughout in prose.

Its language is similar to that of the other Brāhmanas. Nothing is treated of in it in all its details; and even the manner in which every topic is discussed is by no means interesting. The primary object of this Brāhmana is to show and establish the importance and also the efficacy of the four *Vedas*. The Purbardha, or the first part of it, comprises five propathakas or lectures; and the Uttarardha or the last part, consists of six propathakass. And those propathakas are of unequal length. The customary ceremonial of worship is discussed in it, in like manner as in the other Brāhmanas; and there is, indeed very little difference to be seen between the *Gopatha* and those Brāhmanas. It begins with a theory of the creation of the universe as do the other Brāhmanas. It deals with the importance of *Achamana* (sipping water before religious ceremonies) the rules regarding *Diksha* or initiation, the duties appropriate to *Brahmacharins*, the mystic connection of the year with ceremonies, the creation and requirements of ceremonies, the

use of the different Vedas in the performance thereof, the morning, noon, and evening rites, and other minor topics. It is also remarkable on account of the chapter of accidents. It was composed after the schism of the *Charakas* and the *Vajasaneyins*, and after the completion of the *Vajasaneyi-samhita*; and we must at any rate assign to it a later date than to the *Brahmanas* of the other Vedas. The number of *Brahmanas* belonging to the *Sama-veda*, is eight; and their names are: the *Prouaha* or *Maha-brahmana* (i.e. the *Tandya* or *Panchavimsa*) the *Shadvimsa*, the *Samavidhi*, the *Arsheya*, the *Devatadhyaya*, the *Vamsa*, the *Samhitopanishad* and the *Upanishad*, which, probably, is the *Chhandogyanishad*, and is thus ranked among the *Brahmanas*. The *Arsheya-brahmana* is an *Anukramanika* consisting of three and a half *pro-pathakas*. It is found in both the recensions of the *Kouthumas* and the *Jaiminiyas*; but the latter differs considerably from the former. This *Brahmana* is devoted to an enumeration of the *Seers* of the *Saman*.

The *Devatadhyaya*, or the chapter on gods, is composed of four *khandas* or parts. It embraces some miscellaneous fragments both old and new; but has less literary value. This *Brahmana* contains philological speculations regarding the names of some of the *Vaidik* metres, and also shows some traces of the *Buddhistic* doctrines. But, from this, we can not conjecture that this *Brahmana* was found or composed after the advent of *Buddha*, inasmuch as the materials of *Buddha's* doctrines were collected from the *Vedas*. The *Vamsa* is full of myths and legends of great value. This *Brahmana* gives a geneology of the *Rishis* of the *Saman*. It is also called an *anukramanika*; and it is similar in character to the *Arsheya*. The *Tandya-brahmana*, also called the *Panchvimsa*, contains twentyfive books; and treats chiefly of *Soma* sacrifice. It contains a minute description of the sacrifices performed on the banks of the *Sarasvati* and the *Drishadvati*; and of the *Vratyastomas* or sacrifices by the performance of which the degraded *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaisyas* were re-admitted to their respective communities. This *Brahmana* is also extremely rich in legendary contents as well as in information of a general nature; but on the whole, its contents are very dry. It was in the opinion of the Western scholars, contemporary with, or even anterior to the flourishing epoch of the kingdom of the *Kurupanchalas*. The *Shadvimsa-brahmana*, which is a supplement to the *Panchavimsa*, treats of expiatory sacrifices and imprecatory ceremonies. It is supposed by the Western scholars, to be of very modern date. And it not only alludes to temples but also to the images of the gods. The *Samavidhi* is in three chapters; and is of a highly artificial character, and presents no feature of interest. It appears that this *Brahmana* has undergone some re-arrangement, and belongs to a

movement which resulted in the philosophies of Kumarila Bhatta and Samkaracharya. The subject-matter is nothing but the description of certain penances and ceremonies which are altogether of little value. There is, however, mention made of ceremonies some of which are meant for the expiation of sins and crimes ; and in fact, there was then no difference between them. We are therefore warranted to conclude that it contains the germs of the criminal law of later times. Burnell assigns to this Brahmana in its present form not a higher antiquity than the fifth century B. C. A later Brahmana, probably of modern date, and which is not mentioned by Sayana, is the *Adhbhuta-brahmana* or the Brahmana of miracles. It treats of evil occurrences of daily life, auguries and marvels, omens and portents.

The Chhandogya-brahmana of the Sama-veda, of which the Chhandogya-upanishad constitutes a part, comprises ten propathakas ; of these the first two are called the Chhandogya-mantra-brahmana and the rest form the Chhandogya-upanishad. Of the two chapters of the Chhandogya-brahmana the first embraces eight *Suktas* on the ceremony of marriage, and ceremonies to be performed at the birth of a child. The second chapter includes eight *Suktas*, which are consecrated to the Earth, Agni and Indra. It also contains mantras for offering oblations to the Manes, Śurya and various other deities, very often united with a prayer for wealth, health, and prosperity. The concluding mantra has reference to the marriage ceremony. This Brahmana contains also a mass of highly interesting legends indicating the gradual development of Brahmanic theology. The Aitareya or Asvalayana-brahmana, originated in the country of the Kurupanchalas and Vyasa-usinaras. This Brahmana is one of the collections of the sayings of ancient *Brahma* priests, explanatory of the sacred duties of the Hotri priests. Its style is throughout uniform. The greater part of the work appears to have been composed by one and the same author ; some additions, however, were made afterwards. This Brahmana and the Sankhyayana or Kausitaki-brahmana are closely connected with each other ; but there are points of divergence in the distribution of their matter. Though they treat essentially of the same matter, their views of the same question always appear to be antagonistic. The Aitareya contains eight panchikas or pentades, divided into forty chapters, which again are sub-divided into 285 khandas or portions ; but the last ten chapters appear to be later addition to it.

This work treats chiefly of Soma sacrifice. There is also a distinct reference made to four Asramas or stages of life. The Sankhyayana is a perfectly arranged work, and consists of thirty chapters, likewise sub-divided into a number of khandas. It embraces the complete sacrificial procedure

This Brāhmana originated simultaneously with the last few books of the Samhita of the White Yajus. It also appears that the first thirty chapters of the Aitareya-brāhmana are older than those of the Sāṅkhyāyana.

The Satapatha-brāhmana, according to the Mādhyamdina school, is divided into 14 khandas or books, which contain 100 chapters or into 68 propathakas with 438 brāhmanas and 7624 kandikas or portions. In the *kanva-recension* it consists of 17 khandas with 104 chapters, 446 brāhmanas, and 5866 kandikas. This Brāhmana furnishes us with the mystical and philosophical lucubrations of early Brāhman theologians and philosophers. A partial examination of this book shows it to be stamped with a character quite in harmony with that of the Aitareya. And again these two works have claim to be recognised as very ancient records of the religious beliefs and rituals, and of the pristine institution of Indian society. A story in the Satapatha illustrates the relations between the priestly and royal families in the early history of India ; and gives us an insight into the policy which actuated the Brāhmins to struggle from time to time for political influence. The geographical and ethnical allusions point to the regions along the Ganges and the Yamuna ; and there occurs a legend about Videgha and his Purohita (priest) Gotama Rahugana, which has preserved a distinct reminiscence of the spread of Aryah (Aryan) civilisation eastward. There is also a legend of a deluge, in which *Manu* alone was preserved for his sanctity and superior wisdom. According to this interesting legend he was not the creator of man, but a representative of an earlier race of men. The legend of a flood, according to M. Burnouf, is not in its origin Indian ; but was most probably derived from a Semitic source, whether Hebrew or Assyrian. But Prof. Weber has proved that the tradition of Manu's being saved from the deluge, stated in the Satapatha-brāhmana, was really current in India at a much earlier period than Burnouf thought ; and it was not imported into India from any of the Semitic sources. This Brāhmana may have been edited by Yajnavalkya, but its principal portions, like those of the other Brahmanas, must have been accumulating for some period before they were all aggregated and arranged into the sacred code of a new *charana*. The Taittiriya Brāhmana may be regarded as a supplement to its Samhita ; but the former does not differ from the latter so much in character as in point of time. It will be perhaps most astonishing to our hearers that in this Brāhmana as in the Rigveda, we find a description of the Aurora Polaris, the true character of which has not yet been unanimously defined by the Western Scientists. We have also in it a description of a passage to the North Pole.

REALISM IN FICTION.

(By Sushil Kumar De—Third Year Class, Presidency Collège.)

It would be indulging in a commonplace truism indeed to state that the interest of a novel chiefly consists in the human element in it, in the powerful delineation of human life and the dramatic evolution of human character. It goes without saying that novels which are intensely human are intensely interesting. Man is man all the world over and a simple homely portrait of our ordinary course of life, its manifold troubles and vexations, joys and sorrows, difficulties and triumphs, appeals more strongly to our heart than it could have done, had the central interest mainly turned upon the marvellous or the uncommon. No changes in manners and customs can interfere with the hold of such a work upon the human mind, for it enshrines in its pages the eternal and immutable realities of human life, the deepest practical truths shaping human conduct ; it depicts a live picture of the simple homely relations among men, glowing with the romance and freshness of life's sweetest and softest emotions. It is no paradox, when Emerson says that "man can paint or make or think nothing but man." What appeals most to human mind is "the natural portrait of human folly and frailty of which all are judges because all have sat for the picture." This is the reason why Realistic Novels exert so much influence upon the greater portion of novel-readers.

It is foolish indeed to suppose, as some do, that there is not a grain of poetic ingredients in the composition of a Realistic Novel. Some critics hold that Realistic Novels are nothing more than a dry dull chronicle of moving facts, and incidents without that seasoning salt of Romance which gives so much savour to Idealistic Fictions. I suppose this misconception of the nature of Realistic Novel springs either from the inability of the thoughtless reader to sympathise with its natural homely narrative, being carried away by the more dazzling grandeur of the wonderful and the uncommon ; or from the idea given by the writings of those so-called Realistic Novelists (esp. the Sensational Novelists of the French School) who though they profess to study actual life, give us only pictures of the follies and vagaries of higher grades of Society,—pictures un-animated by the true veins of Nature or Art. But true Realistic Novels are composed of a different stuff. Out of the materials furnished by the commonplace incidents of daily life, the novelist builds his rough frame-work, while his vivid imagination and broad poetic sympathy clothe it with living flesh and blood and give it all the grace and loveliness of human beauty. He

presents Nature not in entire nakedness but as seen through the tints of his glowing imagination. The kindly poetic spirit breathes through every page of his work ; and the terse vividness of his realistic picture is softened and toned down by the delicate hues of poetic feeling. In a Realistic Novel, the elements of Realism and Poetry are very skilfully and intelligibly intermixed. With the familiar flavour and fleshiness of Realism is blended in just proportions the rich aroma of idyllic tenderness. But this is not, as some will be led to suppose, a stealthy encroachment upon the domain of Idealism ; for imagination, in a more or less degree, is an indispensable element in all classes of fiction ; and no fiction (in the proper sense of the word) can ever contract or obtain divorce from it. But the vivid realism underlying is, as it were, the warmth of life, animating the inert and lifeless creations of pure fancy. And then, there is much poetry even in the ordinary train of human events that a realistic novel depicts. Whoever denies this is either dull of soul or a misanthrope. We need not go beyond the bounds of our real life for the search of Poetry or Romance. All poetry in this world that has touched the human heart has nurtured strength more or less upon material supplied by human life and human emotions. "The richest romance," it is truly said, "lies enclosed in actual life ; and to unfold that hidden beauty or romance in life is the noble mission of the Realistic Poet or Novelist.

It is difficult indeed to some extent to draw a hard and fast line of demarcation between the provinces of the imaginative romances of the past and the realistic novels of the present. But the idealistic novelist differs broadly from his realistic friend in this respect that while the former presents to us a gorgeous picture of fanciful reality, glowing with the luxuriant lines of poetic fancy, the latter with a few light and homely touches of vivid realism delineates a picture, painted with perfect symmetry ;—a firm presentation of "the most pleasing forms and phenomena" of the world, rich with the glow of life's sweetest emotions and affections. The one fires our imagination, the other touches our heart. The idealistic novelist takes hold of the reader's heart as long as he lingers over the picture, so that, when the vision fades away, the beautiful light and colour and glory of the romance-land linger in the memory only as things seen in a dream. They delight and charm him for a moment and leave no more strong or lasting feeling in his mind than the memory of having seen a rich landscape peopled with imaginary beings. They do not touch the inmost depths of the heart, the inner springs of sympathy and admiration ; they take the heart by storm and leave behind no effects.

In an Idealistic romance, the plot is often full of wild improbabilities and occasional extravagances. There is sometimes no likeness to nature in the fictitious character it paints; we do not see actual human beings in flesh and blood but shadows only, seen through the mysterious haze of poetic fancy. The general effect of the story is more like that of a dream. The construction and execution are often feebler and more artificial, being grounded on pure fancy; the well-worn theme of glorified heroes and heroines is wearisome and occasionally absurd. The worn-out tediousness of their theme has made many a novelist cry out despairingly, like Hawthorne, "I have nothing but thin air to connect my stories of." The hero is more than often a ghostly personage, as it were,—he has attributes, but no flesh and blood, no substance. The life-like portrait of a character in a realistic novel, on the other hand, is drawn with such fidelity and sympathetic interest that even if we put together the visionary characters of fifty romances, they would hardly come up to it. Then again, the incidents in an Idealistic fiction are not well-authenticated by the facts and experiences of actual life; the pathos or tenderness in the story often loses itself in exaggeration. The "wild beauty" of Hyperbole in an idealistic romance contrasts powerfully with the strokes of vividness and naturalness in a Realistic narrative. And the portrait which has no original in real life tries the reader's "sense of very-similitude" rather hard; the air-drawn pictures may afford him intellectual pleasure but they hardly engage his feelings of sympathetic admiration.

In order to appeal strongly to human fancy, in order to be at once a never-failing fund of entertainment on the one hand and an interesting and telling picture on the other, a fiction must have Realism predominating in it over Fancy. Its tone may be pitched in a poetic key but its groundwork must be realistic. It is Realism, and not exuberance of fancy, that gives abundant vigour and interest to the narrative. In trying to soar out of the range of Reality, Idealistic romances are constantly tempted to fly into the regions of pure abstraction; and while boasting that they have broken loose from its so-called "trammels," they do not sometimes, in truth, pass a step beyond its province. It was while speaking of this class of novels, which paint imaginary characters and situations that Goldsmith, himself a novelist, thus gave his advice about novel-reading. Writing to his brother on the education of his son, he said, "Above all things, never let your son touch a romance. How delusive, how destructive are the features of consummate bliss they picture! They teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness that never existed;

to despise the little good that fortune has mixed in our cup by expecting more than she ever gave, and, take my word for it, such books teach us very little of the world."

In a Realistic novel, you will find a rich gallery of living pictures. There you see human nature not only in its glory but also "in pigments and tinctments," the different varieties and shades of character, the heights and depths of love and hatred, the foulness and heinousness of sin, the full radiance of virtue ; there are depicted the everyday strife of human mind with trials and temptations, the manifold joys and sorrows, difficulties and sufferings of human life,—all faithfully portrayed from the real. But though the novelist conjures up pictures which we see daily around us, yet he "wields the wizard's wand," and they are nevertheless pleasing. Some of their situations and characters exercise their power over readers already familiar with them. They produce in us that sense of gratification which we feel when we see the portrait of a well-known face.

In a realistic novelist, the store of materials is varied and inexhaustible, because his province embraces the whole range of human life and events, which, like a pyramid with endless faces, appear in different aspects when viewed from different standpoints. His sphere is wider and more comprehensive than the narrow limits of mere fancy. There is freshness of invention and unbounded flow of true pathos. The creative power of the writer finds a wider field than the narrow and monotonous theme of a hero and a heroine ; and imagination never takes a bolder flight within moderate bounds.

Without any pretensions to digress into the sphere of *Æsthetics*, I may say here briefly that artistic beauty is seen nearer to perfection in a realistic novel, because of the halo of human interest that hovers around it. It is not mere descriptive accuracy or skilful accumulation of facts and details that constitute true realism in a picture : for without that kindly spirit of sympathy breathing through it, which constitutes the triumph of a true artist, the picture is not complete. A consummate artist though he is, the Idealistic novelist is often sadly wanting in that wide sympathy with the joys and sufferings of broader humanity, which lends such indefinable charm and interest to the pages of a realistic novelist. His pictures are more or less ideal ones ; they are not penetrated with that deep sympathy and interest in life in all its shades. The writings of a realistic novelist may not always afford us Elysian pictures of perfect beauty and happiness or profound psychological studies of the complex windings of human heart but still they are fascinating because they embody the plain homely truths

familiar to us from the phases of our own life and our own home,—our home which is “that great altar where the worst among us sometimes perform the worship of the heart, and where the best have offered up such sacrifices and done such deeds of heroism as chronicled, would put the proudest temple of old time, with all their vaunting annals, to the blush.” (*Dickens.*)

But you may say—“A fiction is a fiction ; if you want authentic pictures of human life, why, turn to History and Biography.” But, alas ! History and Biography only point the so-called heroes—how often presenting them in false colour ! They have the charm of reality, it is true, but they move in a circle higher than ours,—and in supreme arrogance they brush aside the class whose lot is cast among dust and ashes. We can never know the Great, and sympathise with them as we do with the work—a day folk whom we meet in the intercourse of our daily life. We have hardly any time to attend to those exceptional beings, those shadowy forms in the world of reality ; there are worthier objects whose interest lies closer to our bosom. The real heroes in this world are very different from the ideally perfect heroes, painted in romances, who “believe nothing but what is true, feel nothing but what is exalted, and do nothing but what is graceful” ; so the novelist, who, by painting “the perennial joys and struggles of our more heavily-laden fellow-men” can bind our heart closer to them by unveiling to our gaze the tragedy, pathos and humour that lie hidden in the experience of those humble souls, yes, that novelist is more entitled to our gratitude than the one who only excites our fancy by feeding it with the fairy tales of “heroes,” the likeness of whom we rarely meet with in our everyday life and who live only in our rosy dreams. “The way,” says George Eliot in *Adam Bede*, “in which I have come to the conclusion that human nature is loveable, the way I have learnt something of its deep pathos, its sublime mysteries,—has been by living a great deal among people more or less commonplace and vulgar, of whom you would perhaps hear nothing surprising if you were to inquire about them in the neighbourhood where they dwell.” In another place, she pleads, “Let us have men ready to give the loving pains of a life to the faithful representative of commonplace things. And why ? Because there are few prophets in this world ; few sublimely beautiful men and women ; few heroes. We cannot afford to give all our love and reverence to such rarities. We want a great deal of those feelings for our everyday fellowmen. It is more needful that we should have a fibre of sympathy connecting us with the vulgar ill-dressed citizen who weighs our sugar or tea—more needful that our heart should swell with loving admiration at some traits of gentle goodness in the people who belong to the

same family-circle as ourselves, than at the deeds of heroes, whom we shall never know but by heresay."

One of the strongest arguments for Idealistic Fictions is that they set before the reader ideals of exemplary character, from which he can form his own ideal of life and conduct. But, as Lord Bolingbroke has remarked, such is the imperfection of human understanding that abstract or general principles, though ever so true, have little influence on us very often, until they are explained from the analogy of real life. The miniature world painted by the novelist sometimes bears no proportion to the real world. The characters of idealistic romances are more or less fanciful and imaginary; we do not meet with anything in the realities of the world answering to those high and rare ideals. And the average reader, whose flight of imagination is often restricted within limited bounds, regards all these to be nothing more substantial than "the fumes of vapourous imagination"; and the picture is often too dazzling to be effective. An unvarnished, though true, portrait of a character is often deeply pathetic in its very simplicity.

As to the important question whether idealistic novels can have realistic *basis*,—I do not agree with those who answer this question affirmatively. There are some modern critics who say that it does not matter much whether the ground-work of any novel, realistic or idealistic, be raised upon materials supplied by the facts of actual life; the true distinction between the two species of novels lying only in the manner of portrayal and the general effect that they produce by their individuality of conception and execution. This conciliatory tone is adopted by those *modern* idealistic novelists who, having found that the novel-reading public has become at last somewhat wearied of romances, on account of their poverty of invention and the resulting sameness of characters, situations and complications, try to evade this difficulty by surreptitiously encroaching upon the proper domain of Realistic novels. The truth of my assertion will be evident from a review of the older novels and romances of middle ages and Renaissance period, the reading of which was at one time the rage in Mediæval Europe. The ridiculous absurdities of these romances of knight-errantry and chivalry were exposed and overthrown by the mighty pen of Cervantes, who was, at the same time, the forerunner of a new school of Fiction, which we may conveniently term the Modern Idealistic School. In Cervantes, we find the same intermingling of the ideal and the real, which we perceive in a marked degree in the pages of his more brilliant successor, Scott. Those novelists of later age, who followed in the footsteps of Scott (and their name is Legion) have invariably imitated their master, more or less, in the art of making his cup more palatable by adulterating it with shreds of Realism.

It is not necessary here, I think, to dilate upon the use of Realistic novels for the purpose of imparting ethical instruction, for this will be clearly evident from all that I have hitherto said of the general use of such novels. The incidents and characters of a Realistic novel, having got closer resemblance to the course of human life and events, the ethical principles which a novel seeks to inculcate, are imparted with more appealing force and produce more deep and lasting impressions. They give us something higher than mere pleasure for they touch the inner chords of sympathy and fellow-feeling.

Finally, we men living amidst the stern realities of the age, must not expect our novels all "perfumed with rose water." It is all very well to steep into a romantic story for relief after a hard day's work ; and so let idealistic romances live only in "the outskirts of our pleasure" and be nothing more. To revive those old-fashioned hackneyed tales of Knights and heroes would be as absurd as the attempt of Don Quixote to re-establish the expiring days of chivalry ; and what are called Idealistic novels of the present are, as I have pointed out, nothing more than a daring unseen-before (though I do not mean to say unwholesome) attempt at smuggling and intermixing the better ingredients of the two great classes of fiction. To wander dreamily in the romance-land can never be any serious business of ours. The romantic glamour of high ideals fades away when they come in painful contact with the coarse realities of life. Let us only be delighted and charmed by their colour and glory but let us give our more serious thought to those simple homely annals of actual life which convey to our soul and sense the highest pleasure, arising from thoughtful sympathy and deep feeling.

RECEPTION TO PROFESSOR A. A. MACDONELL

(Boden Professor of Sanskrit, Oxford.)

The Institute gave a reception to Professor A. Macdonell of Oxford at a social gathering on the 1st February, 1908.

The gathering was graced by the presence of a number of distinguished gentlemen, representing both English and Indian Society. Amongst those present were Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Holinwood, Mr. R. N. Mukerjee, Raja Ranjit Singh Bahadur of Nashipore, Professor Bruhl, Mahamahopadhyaya Satis Ch. Vidyabhusan, Dr. Indu

Madhab Mullick, Babu Sivaprasanna Bhattacharyya, Babu Manmatha mohun Basu, Mr. P. K. Sen, Kaviraj Bijay Ratna Sen, Pandit Kaliprasanna Bhattacharyya, Prof. Benoyendra N. Sen, Dr. Chuni Lal Bose Rai Bahadur, Prof. H. Stephen, Rai Sarat Ch. Das Bahadur, Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerjee, Dr. P. K. Roy, Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Sastri, Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore, Pandit Amulya ch. Ghose Vidyabhushan.

On the arrival of the guest of the evening, a vedic hymn was sung to the accompaniment of the harmonium by the distinguished artist of our city, Mr. U. Ray. This was followed by the singing of a few verses from the Upanishads by a young student, which was very highly appreciated.

Pandit Kaliprasanna Bhattacharyya of the Presidency College then presented the following address to the Professor.

प्राचीनविविधशास्त्रानुशीलन-यशःसुरभीकृतनानादिग्देश—

एम. ए. पि. एड्च. डीतुपहित-श्रीलश्रीयुक्ताचार्य
आर्थार ए. मेकडनेलाभिधीक्षतरण-विद्यालय-संस्कृता
ध्यापक-महोदय-करकमलेषु ।

महाभाग,

वैदेहोवात्यलीलाकरकलितकणक्षेपपूतप्रदेशे

जातं जातो च कालेऽनुकृततदमलाचारराजेश्वरायाः ।

विद्यादेवोप्रसादे प्रसितमतिचिरं तत्रयोषृक्तपूतं

दिष्ट्या दृष्ट्वा भवन्तं वयमिह मुदिताः स्वागतं व्याहरामः । १ ॥

सर्वे भावा भजन्ते बहुविधमनिशं कालिकं पाकमेते

भियन्ते तेन, काले प्रसरति, भुवने भावना-चार-भाषाः ।

प्राचां तेनेतिवृत्ते स्खलति कृतिजनोऽप्याप्तसंस्कारनिष्ठः

बुद्धिस्तत्र प्रसन्ना प्रसरति भवतः पक्षपातप्रमुक्ता ॥२॥

पूर्वेषां नः पितॄणां स्थितिमतिशुभदां तारतम्यप्रभिन्नां
 स्वातन्त्र्येऽप्यैकभाजं चिरमनुसरतां तन्वतां लोकभव्यम् ।
 कष्टं शेषं यशोयत्तदपि च विविधैर्विप्लवैर्भिन्नसंस्थं
 सन्धातुं त्वां प्रवृत्तं प्रमुदितमनसो धीर सन्भावयामः ॥ १ ॥

कलिकाका-नगर्यां, १८२६ शकाब्दे, माघस्याष्टादिशदिवसे, कलिकाता-
 विश्वविद्यालय-समिति-सदस्यगणैर्नोपहृतमेतत् ।

This was followed by the following address from Mahamahopadhyaya
 Pandit Satischandra Vidyabhusana of the Presidency college who
 prefaced it by a short speech in English.

अध्यापक प्रवरः—

आर्थार एण्टनि म्याग्डोनेल् एम्, ए, पि एड्च्, डि,
 महोदयस्य करपङ्कजं समुत्सृष्टः

प्रीतुमपहारः ।

आयाहि साम्प्रतमिह श्रुतिसारसानां
 सत्सौरभैः सततसंस्तुतधीरबन्धो !
 अध्यासस्व चासनमिदं ह्यपि स्वागतं ते
 प्राप्ताः परां मुदमहो तव सङ्गमेन ॥ १ ॥

दिव्यां देवगिरं प्रदिश्य सततं त्वं विश्वविद्यालये,
 तत्रोच्चोत्तरणे न केवलमहो सञ्जीवयन् वर्तसे ।
 जीर्णां शब्दमहाम्बुधेय जननीं तस्याश्च तां सम्पदं
 विज्ञायेह धरातलेऽप्यनुपमां धन्योऽसि विद्वह ॥ २ ॥

प्रोज्झासितेव धरणी शरदिन्दुशुभ्रैः
 ये भारतीयकविभिः कवितायशोभिः ।
 तेषां विलिख्य ननु राजगिरैतिहासं
 प्राप्नोषि सर्व्वजगतां बुध ! साधुवादम् ॥ ३ ॥

धन्या वयं तव शुभागमनेन तस्य
 स्वालङ्कृतेव सदसी ननु भाति सौम्य ।
 आदृत्य सम्प्रति वयं निखिलादृतानां
 नीताःस्म गौरवभुवं सुधियां वरेण्य ॥ ४ ॥

१८९८ शकाब्देय—

माघमासस्याष्टादशदिवसे

}

एम, ए, उपाधिधारिणः

महामहोपाध्याय—

श्रीसतीशचन्द्र विद्याभूषणस्य ।

Pandit Pramatha Nath Tarkabhusana of the Sanskrit College then gave the following address, *extempore*, in Sanskrit.

भोः सभालङ्कारभृताः सहृदयाः !

भारतवर्षीयराजधानौनिवासिनां गीर्वाणवाणीसम्प्रदायरक्षणपराणां
 ब्राह्मणपण्डितैस्त्राख्यया प्रख्यातानां विदुषां प्रतिनिधीभूय विनयेन यद-
 भिधीयते तत्रावधानं दीयमानमभ्यर्थये ।

वस्तुतः सर्व्वेषामेवाऽस्माकं मनसि विद्वद्गरस्याऽस्य सकलविद्वज्जनसम्मानित
 विविधोपाधिभूषितस्य त्रैयुतस्य स्याक्डोनेल् महोदयस्य अनेन शुभागमनेन
 सुमहान् खलुसन्तोषभरः प्रचयसुपैति ।

अस्य हि ममहानुभावस्य अनेन भारतागमनेन स्मृतिपथसुपनीतानि तानि
 किलाऽतीतानि दिनानि, येषु ते साधुचरिता महानुभावाः—फाहियान्—इत्
 सिङ्—डुयेन्—साङ्—प्रभृतयो वेदेशिका विद्वांसः समागम्यातैव भारते अन्ते
 वासितामभजन्-समधिगन्तुं अध्यात्मविद्यां तेभ्यः किल ज्ञानगौरवयशोभासित

दिगन्तेभ्योभारतीयविद्याचार्यैभ्यः । अतीतानि किलास्माकं तानि दिनानि—
 येषु शवर-कुमारिल-शङ्कराचार्यप्रभृतयो ज्ञानारण्यमहर्षयः स्वज्ञानप्रभया
 जगदवभासयन्तो जन्मभूमिगौरवाय जीवन्तिस्म । इन्त गताएव ते कार्याणि
 तुतेषां न गतानि, तैरेवा रोपितस्य विद्यावृक्षस्य यानि मधुरतरफलानि सन्तु
 नाम तानि जीर्णानि ताभ्येव साम्प्रतमपि स्वसाररसभौरभभरेण आकृष्ट
 हृदयान् एवं विधान् गुणयाहिणो वैदेशिकान् विदुषः समानयन्ति अद्यापि
 भारतवर्षे ।

आशास्महे श्रीजगदीशप्रसादतोऽस्य महानुभावस्य भागतदर्शनं निर्व्विन्न-
 मनायासकरं सन्तोषकरं चास्त्विति मन्यामहे च तेन खलुप्रत्यक्षतोऽस्मत्-
 स्वरूपपरिचयेन समुपचितप्रोतिरयं परमोदारप्रकृतिर्महोदयः स्नेहेन तथा
 व्यवहरिष्यति यथा पुनरस्मिन् भारते वर्षे गौर्वाणभाषाया अवश्यमपेक्षणीया
 समुन्नतिः सुकरप्रसरा स्थायितामुपैष्यतीति ।

तदावेदयामोमहात्मन्—

“तववर्त्मनिवर्त्ततां शिवम् पुनरस्तु त्वरितं समागमः ।

अपि साधय साधयेष्वितम् स्मरणीयाः समये वयं सखे ॥”

इतिशम्

After Sir Gooroodas Bannerjee had spoken a few words suitable to the occasion, Professor Macdonell replied in suitable terms, and after a few remarks from M. M. Pandit Haraprasad Sastri, and a concluding song, the gathering dispersed, having spent a very pleasant evening.

A PLEA FOR A WIDER STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY.

Geography, the most fascinating of all subjects, as taught in the primary and secondary schools, is of a very limited character in India. The Calcutta University also gives it little attention. This treatment, to my mind, is not to be commended. Geography is one of the essential subjects in a modern education, one of the most vital, and one of the most practical. Conception of its scope, however, is slowly widening here, and with each widening its

value as an instrument of educational discipline and of practical importance is increasing.

In an English education Geography is given a most prominent place. Its importance in the primary school immediately follows the three Rs. In the secondary school it is the connecting link between the literary—historical and the mathematical—natural science sides. And since the teaching of Geography has been affected by the practical movement, which is now such a force in Europe, greater attention than ever is now accorded to it. So important is the study of geography considered in England that the leading, particularly the modern, Universities have organized geographical departments, and in most it is now possible to take Geography either as an optional subject for the ordinary pass degree, or to obtain a special University diploma after a year's study. At Oxford it is *very properly** included in the faculty of Arts as well as in the faculty of Science. In some of the German Universities Geography may be taken for a teacher's diploma either by a philosophical student or by a natural science student. Let us pause for a time and discuss why geography is of such importance.

'Geography' says one writer 'is the physical basis of history.' Another well known authority expands this statement, Geography as physical basis of history. and considers it is the basis of human activity. He is right in his utterance because the subject deals with the immediate environment which must of a necessity largely influence his activities in all directions. One has only to think how much the peculiar geography of Norway has had to do with the moulding of the strange history of that country with almost nothing to export other than fish and timber, but yet possessing a mercantile navy surpassed only by that of Great Britain. From the nature of their country, more water than land, the Norsemen are forced to be a race of sailors. Having little or nothing of their own to carry, they have become carriers for the rest of the world. It needs no flight of fancy to understand how the topographical condition of England has determined the progress of events in the 'Making of England' and its subsequent developments.

As civilisation advances, man is able to overcome within certain limitations, his geographical environment. The cutting of an obstructive isthmus may effect a radical change in the geographical conditions which influence commerce. As a type one may quote the construction of the Suez Canal which restored to the

* S. Findlay's Principles of Class Teaching p. 60.

Mediterranean that commercial activity which was diverted by the discovery of the Cape route. In India arid districts have been rendered fruitful by irrigation and storage. Railways and steamers by bringing sanatoria within easy reach have rendered it possible for people to live and do strenuous work within the tropics. Such are a few of the directions in which inventive humanity has been able to modify geographical conditions, and render them adaptable to its requirements.

'Geography' is essential for the proper understanding of the problems of different countries and for the promotion of a sympathetic attitude towards other nations thus is laid a scientific foundation for an *entente cordiale*. The more we know of the world, the more we are filled with respect and admiration for our fellow men, and the more we desire to be of use to them. The hill slopes of the Himalayan valleys, terracing their hillsides ceaselessly carry up soil, basket by basket, when the foaming river below leaves a little uncovered, they bring water by this laborious method and that, and finally they brighten a tiny patch of the bare hillside with a fruit-tree or two, and a little square of golden barley. Who would not be filled with admiration for a race that shows such noble courage and ingenuity under the hardest conditions of life? One cannot think of men in this way without ourselves becoming kinder and braver, and better fitted for our own battle in life. History and human life take on a new dignity and a new meaning. Again, too, the study of geography gives a true appreciation of the conditions of the home region, creating a local patriotism, extending to the larger patriotism of country, and as sympathy quickens, the largest patriotism of all—that of the citizen of the world.

The relationship between geography and commerce is very marked. To the commercialman a knowledge of geography is absolutely necessary. Commerce is now cosmopolitan; it is no longer the monopoly of any nation. Every merchant every country feels the intensity of the keen competition. The Germans, we are told, are pressing the English hard in all the markets of the world. This is because the German manufacturer and commercial man are well informed, and know how to adapt themselves to geographical conditions. The young German receives a thorough training in one of the admirable commercial schools so well-known on the continent. In the curriculum of these institutions 4 commercial geography occupies a place of first importance. England, too, has recognised that in the commercial race for supremacy superior knowledge, in the end, must win. Thus, geography in its

many phases, is now a well-provided-for subject in the schools and Universities. It is not the barren thing that passes under that name in this country *It embraces a field that touches the practical business of commerce at every point.*

Surely something can be done in this great land to spread a good, useful knowledge of geography if only for the sake of culture, to say nothing of the great factor it would be in the development of the new Indian industrial era, which one sees rapidly approaching.

"Wake up, India".

H. ARMITSTEAD.

THE NEW LIGHT.

(By Girijaprasanna Sanyal --Fifth Year Class, Presidency College)

India is just on the threshold of a mighty revolution in thought which is bound to reform her ancient civilisation and infect her cherished ideals. A degree of caution and deliberation is essential to this necessary deviation from the beaten track.

The grand upheaval of Industrialism has created an enthusiastic stir in the minds of educated India in the present time and it is meet therefore to see that this sudden out-burst of dormant energy may not exhaust itself in feverous and hysteric paroxysms.

There behind us towers the ever-abiding monument of Arian Spiritualism inculcating the noble lesson of self-denial and denouncing the free indulgence of worldly aspirations, and there, before us flutters the flouting banner of the new Materialism proclaiming the triumph of wealth and brute force in the world.

India wavers between these two paramount forces. And while discerning the baneful offshoots of an over-exercise of the imaginative faculty, which has left her in utter ignorance of the things of this world, she hesitates to condemn the lofty spiritual nature of her legacy in religion and philosophy.

The quest of the unknown grew indeed to be a passion with her and she disdained to plant her foot on the solid reality of life. The hands stretched out to the grasp of the infinite refused to be forced into the precious loins of the earth, the eyes upraised in commerce with the skies hated to be set on the tangible objects of nature. Thus while the mind was soaring to the skies the earth was slipping beneath the feet.

With the progress of time the contact with the advancing world and still more the astonishing enterprises of the Land of the rising sun gave a rude shock to her reverie and as a matter of course she is fast consigning to oblivion the dogma which has so long held her under a spell—*de contemptre omnium vanitatum mundi*.

The world has been opened up in its new aspects. No longer the play ground of Satan and his crew ; or rather the unknown mystery hedged round by Maya has been sublimed into the veritable store-house of knowledge, and the sole objective of scientific research. The bait of Satan has been metamorphosed into the benign figure of the sustaining mother.

Thus while bidding farewell to the old world fancies and mediæval freaks India is likely to risk the courtship of "the dream of Eldorado" which though—signalising the advance of prosperity of Europe at one time, marked her gradual march into the base vagaries of modern materialism. It is therefore feared that a complete divorce from spiritualism, which, in its circumstantial effects and secondary influences, proved a fetter to her onward progress, is sure to leave her in an utter oblivion of her real mission.

If India is destined to regain her place in the hierarchy of nations, she will not certainly figure as a subordinate industrial rival of her sister countries, but as the prophet of a new age of peace and harmony.

The sword was never the weapon of India, any more than the ignoble higgling of the market, her voice. She spoke in melodies, audible to the eternities, and moved with strength, stupefying to the wild commotion of brute force. "The birthplace of Buddhism, the home of Hinduism, the adopted land of Mahomedanism," India will for ever refuse to be degraded into a mere chamber of commerce or desecrated into a den of unbridled ferocity. Her mission is to proclaim to the world that there is a higher destiny for man than mere dollar-hunting, and a higher law of life than *Laissez-Faire* and struggle for existence.

GIRIJA PRASANNA SANYAL.

‘COMME IL FAUT’.

‘Un homme comme il faut’: this is the expressive phrase which is used in French to describe a gentleman—a man such as one ought to be, to translate it clumsily. This demands of a man something more than mere superficial manners if he is to claim the title of gentleman; he must win it by character, not by outward bearing alone.

When do we find this ideal of cultivated manliness? In all the civilized races there abides an instinct which enables them to recognise the true gentleman when he appears. It is not in France alone he is found, though France is a school of manners; nor in England alone though a great writer—not British—says ‘England is rich in gentlemen’. We meet him in unexpected places. The same writer says of the quality of good manners: “It is an element which unites the most forcible persons of every country making them intelligent and agreeable to each other.” Nor is this quality confined to the highborn among the civilized races; being a fruit of character it may be found among those of simple birth. It is one of the glories of India that in every grade of her society one may find examples of politeness in its best sense.

Once I visited a fishing hamlet in a district in Bengal far away from cities and railways. The inhabitants were as primitive and untaught as one could well find and quite out of the range of modern influences. Yet the reception given to me, a stranger and a foreigner, was as gracious as one could have expected in the most polite society. An aged man met us as we entered the group of huts and welcomed us to his own little dwelling. With a grave and kindly dignity he prepared a seat of honour for us. True it was only a mud platform, but he spread a mat upon it saying it was not meet that we should sit on the ground, that the guests must sit ‘with feet hanging’. There was no foolish apologising for the bareness of his house which could furnish no other seat; and we sat down feeling that he had done his best for us like a gentleman; and no duke could have done more.

This little incident, with many others of the same kind, remains in my memory, disposing me kindly to a race whose peasantry even possess the winsome charms of courtesy.

It is perhaps in the manner of receiving a guest into their home that a race most betrays its breeding. Tried by this test India takes a

high and honourable place. For years I have come and gone among the homes of the people both high and humble and only once in all that time can I remember having been received with an ill grace. There has always been the gentle and cordial greeting which makes pleasant intercourse and warm friendship possible.

Long ago in Europe I met an Indian lady for the first time. She was the only foreigner in a large company, but she moved about with a quietness and grace of manner and bearing which we are accustomed to associate with the wellborn. To be really well bred is to be at ease in any society. I was greatly struck by the serenity and charm of this Maratha lady who was not a princess or any great person but the wife of a middle class man belonging to the rank and file of Indian society.

Since coming to India I have discovered that this grace is the common possession of Indian women and it manifests itself particularly in this manner of welcoming a visitor into their homes. They may be busy over some household matter, or taking a midday siesta but they are too kind to make one feel like an intruder. There is none of the self consciousness or fussiness that marks the vulgar. Many Indian women, even of good family, are ignorant of many things which form part of the education of a European girl but they are complete mistresses of that art which cannot be taught in schools but must be inborn—that “beautiful behaviour which is the finish of the fine arts.” The ideal of womanly behaviour is a subtle mingling of modesty and proper self esteem and this combination one does find in the typical well brought up Indian woman.

Faults of manner there may be according to our notions especially a certain childish curiosity which expresses itself in a rain of questions, but this curiosity is often prompted by a kindly interest and does not arise from any real lack of consideration. To ask questions is counted ill mannered in the West but different countries have different standards and in superficial matters we fall short of each other's standards. To judge each other fairly we must get at the essential part of politeness and not apply as tests all its accidental and temporary fashions.

There is an essential part, a foundation from which all politeness springs and that is unselfishness. Unselfishness will naturally show itself in considerateness for others. No selfish person can be truly polite. No truly kind person can be offensive or uncouth. “A sainted soul is always

elegant." Much is built on this foundation, a bewildering structure of forms and fashions but one cannot build truly on any other foundation. Then mere manners take the place of morals, when politeness ceases to have any ethical source and meaning behind its forms, then a nation decays.

India has a noble reputation for fine manners to live up to. These manners are grounded in a real kindness and unselfishness of disposition, just as the brusque bearing of the Englishman has its root in a genuine honesty and fairness of character. It is easy for those of both races who desire it to meet as gentlemen who know how to act and speak 'comme il faut.' Politeness that springs from mutual consideration will smooth away many difficulties and no one will lose by it. Through want of it how much that is painful and unnecessary arises. I have heard an Englishman insult an Indian in a way that made me blush for my country. I used to believe that no Indian was capable of a like harshness and rudeness. Yet once or twice in the last few months I myself have been jostled in the street and rudely commented upon. This astonished me. Such things used not to be in a race characteristically gentle and courteous. Whatever India's sons may become, and the future seems brilliant enough for them, let them not cease to be the gentlemen nature made them; men of long and proud lineage, heirs of ages of culture and piety—surely we may look to find among them many examples of the perfect gentleman, '*C' homme comme il faut*'.

M. M. U.

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